PROVIDING TEACHING RELATED SUPPORT

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QUESTIONS?
- Why are you here....
- Why at NIU?
- Why are you a TA?
- What is your biggest concern regarding your responsibilities as a TA?

OVERVIEW
- Graduate Teaching Assistant Appointments
- University/Departmental Expectations
- Effective Teaching
- Teaching-Related Activities

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS
- Teaching Assistantships
  - Shall be full-time (20 hr/wk), ¾, or ½ time.
  - Are intended to support students pursuing graduate degrees.
  - Provide full tuition waiver during period of appointment.
- Teaching Assistants
  - Aid in the instructional functions of the university.
  - Shall be graduate students in good standing on effective date of appointment

UNIVERSITY EXPECTATIONS
- TA acts as a representative of the University and appointing department and, as such, is expected to comply with and/or enforce University policies:
  - Sexual Harassment
  - Academic Regulations
    o Academic Policies
    o Academic Integrity
    o Academic Misconduct
    o Grading / Grade Appeals

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS (CONT.)
- Academic Integrity
  - “Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another...or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else.”
- Classroom Disruption
  - “When a student’s behavior in a classroom, laboratory, or other formal learning environment is such that the rights of other enrolled students to an effective learning climate are being violated, the student shall lose the privilege of attending or receiving credit in the class.”
DEPARTMENTAL EXPECTATIONS
- Responsibilities will vary with assigned duties:
  - Labs, recitations, tutoring, office hours, proctoring, grading
  - Others?
- Safety / Security Policies
  - Safety / security issues will vary with individual course.
- Be prompt, be prepared, be responsible!

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

TEACHING VS PUBLIC SPEAKING

7 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN UNDERGRAD EDUCATION
- Encourage contact between students/faculty
- Develop cooperation among students
- Encourage active learning
- Give prompt feedback
- Emphasize “time on task”
- Communicate high expectations
- Respect diversity and different ways of learning

LEARNING STYLES
- AUDITORY learner:
  - Needs to “hear” the information. As instructor, you need to be sure to emphasize important points during discussion/lecture, and repeat often.
- VISUAL learner:
  - A picture is worth a thousand words! Incorporate tables/graphs, or molecular graphics/models to illustrate concepts. Provide copies of lecture materials.
- TACTILE learner:
  - Learns by doing, or by mechanical practices. Providing opportunities to write out supplemental lecture notes, or to do sample calculations, etc.
WHAT IS THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOOD TEACHER AND A GREAT TEACHER?

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOOD STUDENT AND A GREAT STUDENT?

Motivation!

TEACHING-RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Responsibilities will vary with assigned duties, but may include:
  - Labs
  - Instructors/Recitations
  - Office hours/Tutoring
  - Proctoring/Grading
  - Others?
- Principles for effective teaching described previously are applicable in all cases!

FIRST DAY OF LAB - CHECKING IN!

- Communication!
  - Lab policies/procedures
  - Syllabus / Grading / Attendance
  - Student responsibilities
    - Your expectations re: cleaning lab space, etc.
  - Resources
    - Blackboard / Office hours / etc.
  - Lab Safety
    - Location of safety equipment, etc.

LAB RESPONSIBILITIES

- Instruction/Pre-lab lecture
  - Review theory/procedures for the lab.
  - Identify safety issues!
- Lab supervision
  - Communication of expectations (first day!)
  - Active supervision and instruction
- Grading
  - Preparation/grading of lab quizzes/exams
  - Grading of lab reports

LAB RESPONSIBILITIES (CONT.)

- Safety!
  - Behavioral Conduct
    - Promote safety consciousness in students
    - Provide safe environment for other students
  - Miscellaneous issues
    - Eating/drinking in lab
    - Dress codes (e.g., lab goggles, no sandals...)
    - Specific hazards (chemicals / equipment / etc.)
  - Lab safety requires active TA monitoring!
HELPFUL HINTS FOR LECTURES / RECITATIONS

 Be Prepared!
  • Know your material
  • have notes / overheads ready and organized
  • include sample problems / calculations if appropriate
  • Include “active learning” activities (if appropriate)
 Be Receptive
  • make eye contact
  • ask / encourage questions

PREPARATION OF QUIZZES / EXAMS

 Scope
  • what concept or information is being tested? ("trick" questions?)
 Level of Difficulty
  • is the question comparable to examples students have seen previously?
 Length
  • can the average student finish within the allotted time?

WORDS OF WISDOM

 If you don’t know - ask!
 Attitude - your students will follow your lead.
 Golden Rule - treat your students as you would like to be treated.
 Have Fun!

REFERENCES/ADDITIONAL INFO

 Sites located by Google = Effective Teaching
  • http://www.uab.edu/uaosincome/cdm/teaching.htm
  • http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm
  • This site has additional links to helpful articles, etc.
  • http://www.engr.wisc.edu/services/etc/strategies.pdf
  • http://tep.uoregon.edu/

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